
The Struggle of Races and Social Groups as a Factor in the Development of Political and Social Institutions:
An Exposition and Critique of the Sociological System of Ludwig Gumplowicz

Author(s): Harry E. Barnes

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THE STRUGGLE OF RACES AND SOCIAL GROUPS
AS A FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL
INSTITUTIONS

AN EXPOSITION AND CRITIQUE OF THE SOCIOLOG-
ICAL SYSTEM OF LUDWIG GUMPLOWICZ

*By Harry E. Barnes, of the Department of History and
International Relations, Clark University*

I. INTRODUCTORY REVIEW OF THE ORIGINS OF THE CONCEPT
OF THE STRUGGLE OF GROUPS AS A PRIME FACTOR
IN SOCIAL EVOLUTION

The general notion that conflict and struggle have played a vital part in both cosmic and social evolution is an old one. As early as the close of the sixth century B.C., Heraclitus of Ephesus is reputed to have remarked in a strain quite Bernhardian that "War is common to all and strife is justice, and all things come into being and pass away through strife."¹ The concept of "war as determiner," then, dates back almost to the dawn of human reflection upon the problems of development and progress, and its persistence through the centuries is but a reflection and an indication of the undoubted validity of the doctrine when not pushed to an extreme or regarded as absolute and eternal in its application. Herodotus (c. 484-424 B.C.) considered the Persian War as the collision of two fundamentally opposed civilizations, and had no doubt that the victory of the Greeks was an unmistakable proof that the gods had expressed their approval of Hellenic "Kultur."² While he was compelled to witness the actual expansion of the Macedonian Empire, Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) opposed the policy of ter-

¹ A. W. Benn, *Ancient Philosophy*, p. 20; cf. E. Zeller, *Greek Philosophy to the Time of Socrates*.

² Cf. J. B. Bury, *The Ancient Greek Historians*, pp. 44-45.

ritorial expansion, set forth the patriarchal theory of political origins, regarded the small city-state as the ideal political unit, and held that stability was the chief criterion for judging of the excellence of the administration of particular states.³ Polybius (203–121 B.C.), one of the greatest historians, sociologists, and political scientists of antiquity, may properly be considered the originator of the historical theory of the origin of the state through the application of force. Drawing his conclusions from his detailed study of the development of the Roman Republic through military expansion, he contended that political evolution was a social process which was initiated by war and conflict, but which was progressively tempered by the introduction of the elements of reason, reflection and consent.⁴ The Epicureans among the Greeks, as well as their Roman followers, such as Lucretius and Horace, took from Heraclitus the doctrine of the origin of all things in conflict and strife, but held that the inconveniences of warfare and anarchy in society led to the establishment of a stable political order and the introduction of the “reign of law.”⁵ The epic poet, Virgil, and the epic historian, Livy, both sang the praises of the ruthless Roman expansion, the swallowing up of smaller states by the Roman octopus, and the “peaceful blessings” of the rule of the autocratic Roman minority.⁶

Though the Christian theologians expanded the Stoic doctrines emphasizing the essential brotherhood of mankind, historical conditions made it inevitable that the Dark Ages, the first centuries of the Christian domination of the Western world, should witness a prevalence of warfare unparalleled since the conquests of early Rome. This political environment reacted upon the writers of the period, who represented the development of political institutions as a perpetual struggle to substitute law and stability for strife

³ *Politics*, Jowett's translation, Book I, 1–2; VII, 4–15.

⁴ *History of Rome*, trans. by Schuckburgh, Book VI, 5–6.

⁵ E. Zeller, *Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics*, pp. 490–498; L. Stein, *Die Sociale Frage im Lichte der Philosophie*, pp. 228–230.

⁶ Cf. H. Peter, *Wahrheit und Kunst*.

and disorder.⁷ With the development of Scholasticism in the thirteenth century and its revival of Aristotelian political theory, the patriarchal theory of political origins again became popular and persisted until the disintegration of the scholastic philosophy with the new intellectual impulses which came from the "Commercial Revolution."⁸

In the latter part of the fifteenth century there began that process of exploration and commercial expansion which marks the dawn of modern history and has now come to be known as the *Commercial Revolution*. It brought with it the general suppression of the feudal system and the rise of the modern dynastic national states through the struggle of the kings against the feudal lords—an environment admirably suited to the production of theories of social conflict.⁹ As Italy was first affected by the development of commerce in the later medieval period, it is not surprising that the earliest modern exponent of *Machtpolitik* was an Italian, Nicolo Machiavelli (1469–1527), whose philosophy reflected the continual inter-urban strife of the Italy of his day. Being a great admirer of Polybius, he adopted the latter's theory of political origins, but was not willing to stop at this point. He insisted that the state not only originated in force, but that it must continue to expand or perish. He not only rejected the Aristotelian notion of the virtue of political stability, but also departed from classical and Christian precedents by ejecting ethics from the domain of political philosophy, and maintained that considerations of individual morality have no relation to the acts of a state, thus revealing himself as an expositor of *Realpolitik* as well as of *Machtpolitik*.¹⁰ The French publicist, Jean Bodin (1530–1596), mirrored the process of national unification

⁷ A. J. Carlyle, *A History of Medieval Political Theory*, vol. I, pp. 211–212; vol. II, pp. 56–74, 143–144; J. M. Littlejohn, *The Political Theory of the Schoolmen and Grotius*, pp. 26–33,

⁸ Aquinas, *De regimine principum*, Book I, 1; F. W. Coker, *Readings in Political Philosophy*, pp. 129ff.

⁹ W. Cunningham, *Western Civilization*, vol. II, Book V; C. J. H. Hayes, *Political and Social History of Modern Europe*, vol. I, pp. 27–72; W. C. Abbott, *The Expansion of Europe*, vol. I.

¹⁰ *Discourses*, trans. by Detmold, Book I, Chap. vi.

in France through the civil wars of the sixteenth century, which culminated in the coronation of Henry IV. He viewed society and the state as an aggregate of lesser social groups, and held that the state was produced by the forcible amalgamation of these smaller social entities.¹¹ Bodin's theory of the group composition of the state was carried to an extreme by the German jurist, Johannes Althusius (1557–1638), who legally recognized the individual citizen only as a member of one of the series of lesser constituent groups which went to make up the federal and contractual state which Althusius created in the realm of political theory.¹² The English absolutist, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), was another forerunner of the modern conflict school. To discredit the revolutionary tendencies and theories of his day in England, he emphasized the great value of political authority by dwelling at length upon the evils of the incessant warfare which must always be a concomitant of anarchy and the absence of authoritative political control. While he is conventionally regarded as a great exponent of the contractual theory of political origins, Hobbes argued that this contract need not be voluntary, but might be forced by a conquering group upon a conquered people.¹³

Important and interesting as the above anticipations of the "conflict school" may be, there can be no doubt that the real founder of the modern version of the historical theory of political origins was David Hume (1711–1776). In his destructive criticism of the social contract theory, Hume offered as a substitute the doctrine which had been foreshadowed by Polybius and Bodin, namely, that the state and government originate in force, but come to rest more and more upon consent, as the subject citizens begin to appreciate the value of political control and institutions.¹⁴

¹¹ *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*, trans. by R. Knolles (London, 1606), pp. 47ff.; 262ff.

¹² *Politica methodice digesta*, Chaps, i, vi–ix, xix; cf. O. Gierke, *Johannes Althusius und die Entwicklung der naturrechtlichen Staatstheorien*, chaps. i–iii.

¹³ *Leviathan*, chap. xvi.

¹⁴ *A Treatise of Human Nature*, vol. II, pp. 111, 114, 140, 259–265; *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, vol. I, pp. 113–117; 447ff., vol. II, pp. 197ff.

But Hume was a philosopher and a psychologist rather than a historian and his doctrines were expressed only in a fragmentary manner. It remained for his disciple, Adam Ferguson (1723–1816), the first real historical sociologist, to present the earliest systematic elaboration of the historical theory of political evolution.¹⁵ So greatly did he stress the importance of conflict and competition that Gumpłowicz has correctly maintained that he was the first great exponent of the theory of social and political development, viewed as the product of the struggle of social groups.¹⁶ Hegel's conception of the development of society and civilization as a process of conflict was an important contribution to this type of doctrine, though Hegel's emphasis was upon the psychic rather than the physical aspect of strife.¹⁷

The founders of modern sociology, Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer, while accepting the historical theory of political origins in the promordial struggle and amalgamation of social groups, did not push this doctrine to an extreme. Comte held that not only force, but also the Aristotelian doctrines of the inherent sociability of man and the social division of labor, must be assumed as necessary to explain the origin and growth of the state.¹⁸ Spencer, in drawing his famous contrast between militant and industrial society, contended that while society, the state and government originated in the primeval warfare that produced the amalgamation and integration of primitive social groups, there was an inevitable tendency to substitute an industrial for a military basis of social life and political activity, and to replace warfare by industrial competition.¹⁹

The great impulse to an elaboration of schemes of social evolution based upon the idea of conflict, however, came from the new Darwinian dynamic biology, with its basic premise of organic evolution proceeding from a struggle for

¹⁵ *The History of Civil Society*, passim.

¹⁶ *Die sociologische Staatsidee*, pp. 77–80.

¹⁷ Robert Flint, *The Philosophy of History in France and Germany*, pp. 496–541,

¹⁸ *The Principles of a Positive Polity*, vol. II, pp. 247ff.

¹⁹ *The Principles of Sociology*, vol. II, pp. 241ff.; 265ff.; 331ff.; 568ff.; 603ff.; 646ff.

existence and the survival of the fittest. Just as the social philosophers of the eighteenth century hastened to interpret society in terms of the Newtonian laws of dynamics, so impetuous sociologists and political scientists, in spite of Darwin's warning, lost no time in attempting to carry this new biological formula directly over into the field of sociology and politics without making any allowance for the radical differences in the data with which they were dealing. Even this rash departure would not have been so disastrous had not the evolutionary hypothesis been perverted to support the particular policies of ambitious and unscrupulous political groups and parties. Bagehot's brilliant contribution to this field in his *Physics and Politics* showed how valuable the new doctrines might be when used with caution and wholly in the interests of candid and impartial political science. The great evil which has resulted from the perverted application of the Darwinian biology to the interpretation of history and social processes appeared when the biological theories were exaggerated and exalted in the service of the exponents of *Machtpolitik*, militarism, autocracy and racial egoism. In view of the well established fact that political and social theories invariably take root where they are politically serviceable or where the social and political environment seems to make them plausible, it is not strange that the earliest extensive development of this pseudo-Darwinian sociology was in that land of incessant racial and national conflicts—Austria-Hungary—and that it has been received with the greatest éclat and the widest general acceptance by that nation which has been the most congenial home of racial egoism, *Machtpolitik*, and militarism, the German Empire, founded and shaped by Otto von Bismarck.

The other phase of the general doctrine of social conflict, namely, the proposition that social and political processes within the state are fundamentally a struggle between classes and groups organized about definite special interests, has an equally venerable past. It was recognized by Aristotle in his analysis of parties, and Polybius went so far as to hold that a stable government must accord definite representation to at least the larger types of class interests in a state.

This view persisted in the medieval practice of representation of estates, and was elaborated by the great theorists of the Conciliar period and by Althusius. This rational conception of party organization and political representation was temporarily submerged by the doctrine of personal representation—one of the many disastrous absurdities which were introduced into political theory and practice through the neurotic sublimations in the political philosophy of Rousseau. In spite of the attempts of Marx in Europe and Calhoun in America to bring back the more rational view of party organization and political representation, it has been only in recent years that the doctrine of political activity as a process of conflict and adjustment between opposed interest-groups has begun steadily to gain ground in theory and must ultimately be restored in practice.

II. GENERAL NATURE OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF GUMFLOWICZ

One of the pioneers in the development of sociological theory and the leader of the so-called "conflict school" was the Austrian publicist and sociologist, Ludwig Gumplowicz (1838–1909).²⁰ Possessed of wide, if not wholly critical, learning, and a voluminous writer, no sociologist, with the possible exception of L. F. Ward, has been more impressed with the finality of his own doctrines, and one cannot escape the conviction that many, if not most, of the propositions which he advanced as being supported by "blind natural law" or as manifestations of "inevitable tendencies of the cosmic process" were merely the opinions of Gumplowicz upon the particular problem under consideration. Yet, in spite of his dogmatism, Gumplowicz must be accorded the credit of having first intensively explored one of the most fertile fields of sociological investigation. His thorough analysis of the social process, viewed as the interaction of conflicting groups, is one of the most fundamental notions

²⁰ Professor in the University of Graz after 1882. Brief sketches of Gumplowicz's life and sociological writings are to be found in the *American Journal of Sociology*, November, 1909, pp. 405–413.

which has yet been brought forward by sociology and constitutes a contribution of the greatest permanent value. In addition to his specific interpretation of the nature of the social process, Gumplowicz was, perhaps, the first avowed sociologist to emphasize the importance of the general sociological concept of society and socialization as a developmental *process*—a line of sociological thought which has been greatly expanded by Gumplowicz's fellow-countryman, General Gustav Ratzenhofer, and by Prof. Albion W. Small, a leading disciple of the latter.

Sociology, according to Gumplowicz, is the science of the interrelation of social groups.²¹ It is the function of sociology to demonstrate that social phenomena are amenable to measurement and can be reduced to verifiable laws:

The function of sociology consists in showing that universal laws apply to social phenomena; in pointing out the peculiar effects produced by them in the social domain; and finally in formulating the special social laws.²²

Gumplowicz gives a narrow interpretation to the nature of social phenomena, describing them as those which appear "through the operation of groups and aggregates of men on one another."²³ Accordingly, the social process throughout history has simply consisted in the relations and reciprocal actions between heterogeneous social groups and elements.²⁴ Social laws, in turn, become merely the laws of the interaction and development of syngenetic social groups. Gumplowicz's whole system of sociology was thus narrowed and somewhat distorted by his presuppositions, but it cannot be denied that he fearlessly developed his deductions from the assumed premises with Hobbesian logic and clarity.

Gumplowicz's sociological system has long been regarded as the classic example of the influence of a writer's social

²¹ *The Outlines of Sociology*, translated by F. W. Moore, Philadelphia, 1899, pp. 83ff.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 82-3. One can give assent to this proposition without accepting as valid the ten "universal laws" formulated by Gumplowicz. cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 74ff.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 101f, 121, 123; *La Lutte des races* (French translation of *Der Rassenkampf*, by Chas. Baye, Paris, 1893), pp. 167-168, 261.

and political environment upon his theory.²⁵ The almost unique ethnic and cultural diversity and the continual struggle of national groups and social classes in Austria-Hungary as well as the control of political authority by a minority in both states of the Dual Monarchy, have unquestionably colored, if not entirely determined, the main lines of his whole sociological system, based as it is upon the premises of ethnic diversity, group and class conflict, the political sovereignty of a ruling minority, and the problems of political and national emancipation, cultural assimilation, and ethnic amalgamation. It is highly important that this should be kept in mind in estimating the validity of generalizing Gumpłowicz's propositions as sociological laws of universal applicability.²⁶

Aside from his excessive emphasis upon social groups and their conflict as the unit of sociological investigation, the two most noteworthy propositions in the sociological system of Gumpłowicz were his denial of the importance of the individual and his refusal to admit the existence of verifiable human progress for humanity as a whole. No other sociologist, not even Tarde, Durkheim, Sighele, LeBon, or Trotter went to such an extreme as Gumpłowicz did in minimizing the importance of the individual and in magnifying the degree of coercion and determination exerted by the group upon the individual. In a passage which has become threadbare through citation he said:—

The individual simply plays the part of the prism which receives the rays dissolves them according to fixed laws, and lets them pass out again in a predetermined direction and with a predetermined color.²⁷

²⁵ Cf. E. A. Ross, *Foundations of Sociology*, pp. 276–277.

²⁶ Cf. A. W. Small, *American Journal of Sociology*, July, 1898, pp. 105–106.

²⁷ *Outlines*, p. 157. Cf. also the following: “The greatest error of the individualistic psychology is the supposition that man thinks . . . This is an error. He is not self-made mentally any more than he is physically. His mind and thoughts are the product of his social medium, of the social element whence he arose, in which he lives.” *Ibid.*, pp. 156, 760. Or again, “On the altar of her method of study, sociology sacrifices man. He, the lord of creation, the author of historical events as the historians think, he who as monarch or as minister guides according to his will the destiny of peoples . . . sinks away, in sociology, to a meaningless

Even further from general acceptance among sociologists is Gumpłowicz's denial of the historical progress of humanity as a totality. While recognizing improvement in particular periods or in specific societies, he questioned the existence of any progressive development of human society as a whole, and held that the historic process is but the record of the rise and fall of countless successive civilizations following a cyclical course of growth and decline.²⁸ Gumpłowicz thus, not only rejected the doctrine of Turgot, Condorcet, Godwin and Ward regarding the possibility of indefinite progress, but also even refused to accept the rather timid contention of Vico that progress took the course of a spiral. With Machiavelli and LeBon, he fell back upon the theory of the cyclical nature of the movement of history, which was common in classical times and was then best expressed by Polybius.²⁹

Gumpłowicz's general sociological theories lead directly to his analysis of social and political institutions. He applied his doctrine of group conflict to an interpretation of

cipher. In complete contradiction to the portrayals of the historians, even the mightiest statesman is for the point of view of the sociologist only a blind tool in the invisible but all-powerful hand of his social group, which itself in turn only follows an irresistible law of nature." *Sociologie und Politik*, p. 54. Cited and translated by Prof. G. L. Burr, *American Historical Review*, January, 1917, p. 269 and note. The selection of Gumpłowicz by historians and political scientists as an illustration of the sociological view of human individuality and freedom is entirely analagous to a choice of Froude or Lamartine by sociologists as samples of historical methodology and accuracy. Sociologists, such as Spencer, Novicow and W. G. Sumner, have not been lacking who have defended the extreme individualistic point of view and those alarmed by the exaggerations of Gumpłowicz can gain a great deal of satisfaction and reassurance from a study of the works of Prof. C. H. Cooley, who has undoubtedly given the world one of the best interpretations of the interrelation of the individual and society that has been presented by any writer, sociological or psychological. Even the extreme doctrine of Gumpłowicz, however, is probably as near to the truth as the opposite views of Fichte, whose spirit inspired, in part, the founders of modern scientific historiography.

²⁸ Somme toute, dans l'ensemble du processus naturel de l'histoire, il n'y a ni progrès ni recul; il n'y a progrès que cà, et là, dans certaines périodes de cet éternel cycle, dans certains pays où le progrès social recommence toujours. *La Lutte des races*, pp. 348-349; cf. *Outlines*, p. 207.

²⁹ Cf. Bury, *The Ancient Greek Historians*, pp. 248, 256.

the nature, development, and functioning of the state and regarded it as adequate to explain every phase of political action and theory.³⁰

III. THE STRUGGLE OF GROUPS AS THE BASIS OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PROCESSES

1. THE RELATION OF SOCIOLOGY TO POLITICAL SCIENCE

Gumplowicz's conception of the relation of sociology to the special social sciences is clear and logical: "Being the science of human society and social laws, sociology is obviously the basis of all the special social sciences treating parts of human society, or of particular manifestations of associated life."³¹ Sociological investigations have first made possible a scientific study of political institutions, since only by being based upon the laws of political development and processes, which have been revealed by sociology, can the analysis of political phenomena assume a scientific character.³²

³⁰ Gumplowicz's writings on sociology and political theory are voluminous. No other sociologist has contributed as extensively to political theory. His fundamental theories, centering about the conflict of groups and classes, are brought out in a dozen volumes and many essays published between 1875 and 1910, and they form the specific content of no less than seven separate books. As he added nothing except in the way of amplification to the doctrines expressed in his earliest works, the rather monotonous repetition and reiteration of the same principles tend more to weary than to convince the reader. The earliest statement of his "group-conflict" theory appeared in his *Race und Staat*, 1875. This doctrine received its first systematic presentation in *Der Rassenkampf*, 1883. The theory was further amplified and systematized and made a part of a coherent body of sociological theory in the *Grundriss der Sociologie*, 1885, which work constitutes the best statement of his sociological doctrines. His sociological theory was applied to political institutions, but without any important changes or additions, in *Sociologie und Politik*, 1892, and *Die sociologische Staatsidee*, 1892. His whole sociological system was summed up conveniently in *Sozialphilosophie im Umriss*, published posthumously in 1910. Aside from the works mentioned, Gumplowicz's chief publications were *Philosophisches Staatsrecht*, 1877; *Verwaltungslehre*, 1882; *Das Österreichische Staatsrecht*, 1891, *Rechtstaat und Socialismus*, 1881; *Soziologische Essays*, 1899; *Geschichte der Staatstheorien*, 1905; *Das allgemeine Staatsrecht*, 3rd. ed. 1907.

³¹ *Outlines*, p. 90.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 89.

2. THE NATURE OF THE STATE

Gumplowicz's theory of the nature of the state is strictly in accord with his general sociological doctrines and is distinctively a sociological conception of the state. "The state," he holds, "is a social phenomenon consisting of social elements behaving according to social laws."³³ At the same time, the state must be carefully differentiated from society. The term *society* may be applied to the ensemble of conflicting interest-groups within any organized unit of mankind, but the term *folk* is better suited to the description of such a cultural unity. In a more accurate sense, a society is a "group centering about some one or more common interests."³⁴ The *state* on the other hand, is a portion of mankind organized and controlled by a sovereign minority:

If nothing but the universal and essential characteristics of every state were incorporated in the definition, an agreement could easily be reached for there are but two. First, there are certain institutions directed to securing the sovereignty of some over others: secondly, the sovereignty is always exercised by a minority. *A state, therefore, is the organized control of the minority over the majority.* This is the only true and universal definition; it is apt in every case.³⁵

The state, according to the conception held by Gumplowicz, is far from an "ethical being." It has never been founded to preserve justice or improve the general welfare. The sole motive in the formation of all states has been the desire of establishing sovereignty for the purpose of exploitation. The concern of the highly developed states with justice and welfare is but incidental to their original and fundamental motive and purpose, namely, exploitation.³⁶ Again, questions of morality cannot be intelligently considered in a discussion of the nature and actions of states. The state is an inevitable product of "blind natural laws" operating upon heterogeneous social groups. Hence, it is a natural phenomenon. It is not "above morality," but,

³³ *Outlines*, p. 116.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 136-138.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 118; italics are mine; cf. *Lutte des races*, pp. 218, 222-223.

³⁶ *Outlines*, p. 119.

rather, has no more relation to ethical considerations than an earthquake or a tornado.³⁷

3. THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF STATES, VIEWED AS THE PRODUCT OF THE CONFLICT OF GROUPS AND THEIR PROGRESSIVE AMALGAMATION

It is through his theory of the origin and development of the state that Gumplowicz has made his most important and permanent contribution to political theory. While few would agree with the details of his doctrine, or with his sweeping generalizations regarding the universality of the origin of states wholly through conquest and conflict, it is generally admitted that the account of political origins which he sets forth with great vigor and clarity is the most satisfactory and fundamental explanation of the origin of the state which has yet been produced. It probably goes further towards clearing up the problem of political origins than any other single theory, and it has gained such general acceptance among sociologists that it may almost be designated as *the* sociological theory of the origin of the state.³⁸

For the sake of orientation in further analysis, the theory of Gumplowicz regarding political origins may be briefly summarized as follows: mankind must be assumed to have had a polygenetic origin, resulting in the existence of many different or heterogeneous social groups. These groups were led into conflict with one another through the natural and inevitable tendency of all individuals and groups to improve their economic status and to increase the means of satisfying their desires. The first conquests of one group by another normally resulted in the extermination of the conquered, but sooner or later slaughter was commuted into

³⁷ *Outlines*, pp. 146-148, 151-152.

³⁸ An enthusiastic defence of this theory by Lester F. Ward is to be found in *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1902, p. 762. Its limitations are pointed out by Giddings, *Principles of Sociology*, p. 316; and by Hayes, *An Introduction to the Study of Sociology*, pp. 538ff. It is bitterly criticized and entirely rejected by Novicow in *La Guerre et ses pretendus bienfaits* and *La Critique du darwinism social*. Most sociologists and historians, however, reject his deductions rather than the essentials of his theory of political origins.

physical and political subjection and there arose the institutions of political sovereignty and the state. The first crude and elementary political society was soon complicated by the origin of various social, economic, and religious classes, each called into existence to supply some definite need in society. The process of conflict, which originally took the shape of inter-group conquest, accordingly became transformed into a conflict between the different classes within the state. This process led to a general amalgamation and assimilation of the diverse elements within the state and the gradual political emancipation of the masses. When carried to completion a folk-state or nation—the highest product of social evolution—was fully created. Attention may now be turned to a brief analysis of the main stages and processes involved in this interpretation of the origin and development of the state.³⁹

Quite in contrast with the procedure of Ward who boldly analyzes the conditions existing in the period before the "chaos," Gumpłowicz maintains that the sociologist cannot discover the ultimate origin of society but must content himself with assuming the existence of the social groups required to originate the social process.⁴⁰ He does not consistently hold to this position, however, but attempts to defend so extreme a view of polygenism that he practically succeeds in constructing a *reductio ad absurdum* of the polygenist position.⁴¹ In short, he holds that the prehistoric period was characterized by the origin and differentiation of heter-

³⁹ The analysis which follows is based upon Gumpłowicz's most extensive treatment of the origin of the state as found in Book IV of *Der Rassenkampf* and Part III of the *Grundriss*. Somewhat condensed versions of the same theory are to be found in *Sociologie und Politik*, pp. 72–78, *Die sociologische Staatsidee*, pp. 88–134; and *Sozialphilosophie im Umriss*, pp. 58–68.

⁴⁰ *Outlines*, p. 86.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 92ff.; *La Lutte des races*, pp. 41ff., 182ff., 353ff. Gumpłowicz's method of handling ethnographic data in support of his theories is that of the uncritical comparative school of anthropologists which held the field thirty years ago, and his arguments from ethnography are, therefore, not entirely convincing. Fortunately, his theory of political and social origins does not depend for its validity upon the now generally discredited polygenist doctrine of human origins.

ogeneous social groups, while the historic era has witnessed their integration, amalgamation, and assimilation.⁴²

Throughout the period of associated human life there have been certain forces making for group unity and solidarity, which, as a totality, can be described by the general term *syngenism*. This he defines as "That phenomenon which consists in the fact that invariably in associated modes of life, definite groups of men, feeling themselves closely bound together by common interests, endeavor to function as a single element in the struggle for domination."⁴³ It is a complex of physical, economic, moral, and cultural forces combined in different proportions in various periods and in diverse social groups. In the earliest groups consanguinity was the strongest bond, but, as society develops, the economic and psychic forces become increasingly important.⁴⁴

Gumplowicz, then, assumes at the outset of the historical process of social and political development a large number of small social groups or hordes, each united by consanguinity and identity of economic interests, and living in sexual promiscuity and equality of social position. The origin of the matriarchate, and later the patriarchate, provided a crude type of organization for these groups.⁴⁵ This preliminary period of social evolution was broken down by the origin of war and inter-group conflict and thus there was initiated that eternal process of social struggle which can never have an end. In external relations the groups have continually attempted to effect further conquests, and within each expanding group there has been a ceaseless contest going on between an ever increasing number of competing social groups or classes.⁴⁶ The fundamental motive of group conquest throughout history has been the desire for an improvement of economic well-being:

⁴² *La Lutte des races*, p. 182.

⁴³ "Le phénomène consistant en ce que toujours, dans la vie sociale, certains groupes d'hommes, sentant qu'ils sont étroitement reliés entre eux, cherchent à agir comme un seul facteur dans la lutte pour la domination." *La Lutte des races*, pp. 241-242.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 245; *Outlines*, pp. 139, 142-143.

⁴⁵ *Outlines*, pp. 110-113; 139.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 166ff., 125; *La Lutte des races*, pp. 167-168, 210ff., 217.

The motive force in the establishment of primitive political relations was economic, as has been seen; higher material welfare was sought. But this force never fails; the innermost nature of man keeps it in ceaseless operation, promoting the development of the state as it laid its foundation. Investigate the cause of any political revolution and the result will prove that social progress is always produced by economic causes. Indeed, it cannot be otherwise since man's material need is the prime motive of his conduct.⁴⁷

In the earliest type of group conflict the conquered were exterminated, but in the course of time there was instituted that fundamental transformation in social evolution whereby a general massacre was commuted into slavery and economic exploitation.⁴⁸ In this process of the superimposition of one social group upon another, and the subjection and exploitation of the weaker, is to be found the origin of sovereignty and the state.⁴⁹ No state, Gumpłowicz contends, has ever arisen except through the conquest of one group and ethnic stock by another. The state is invariably a composite of heterogeneous racial and social elements. "No state has arisen without original ethnical heterogeneity; its unity is the product of social development."⁵⁰ Political relations in the early states depended upon the economic foundations of the new compound society. The sovereign minority exploited the conquered majority and the first states were, thus, a two-fold organization, on the one hand of sovereignty, and on the other of enforced labor:

Thus nature laid the foundations of ethnically composite states in human necessities and sentiments. Human labor being necessary, sympathy with kindred and tribe and deadly hatred of strangers led to foreign wars. So conquest and the satisfaction

⁴⁷ *Outlines*, p. 123. Though an ardent supporter of the Marxian doctrine of the economic interpretation of history, Gumpłowicz rejected the socialistic dogma of state activity as the chief factor in social reform.

⁴⁸ *La Lutte des races*, pp. 161-162; *Outlines*, pp. 117-119.

⁴⁹ *Outlines*, pp. 116-121; *La Lutte des races*, pp. 218ff.

⁵⁰ *Outlines*, p. 119. In another part of his work Gumpłowicz rather grudgingly admits that it is conceivable that a state may, in extremely rare instances, have originated through the peaceful division of labor and the differentiation of classes, but maintains that even in such cases its later history as a conflict of divergent interests would be the same as though it had originated in group conflict. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

of needs through the labor of the conquered, essentially the same though differing in form, is the great theme of human history from prehistoric times to the latest plan for a Congo state.⁵¹

The minority of conquerors was able in the first instance to overcome, and later to exploit, the conquered majority because of superior unity and discipline, for unity and discipline are the chief source of the strength of all social groups.⁵²

As soon as the first political relations were established through group conquest, resulting in the exploitation of a subject majority by a sovereign minority, the process of social conflict became transformed from external strife between groups or states into a struggle between classes within the state. This intra-group conflict, in addition to its fundamental economic motive, was also stimulated by the "necessity for satisfying ambition, love of glory, the interests of a dynasty, and various other ideals; and the life and death struggle between hordes anthropologically different becomes a contest between social groups, classes, estates, and political parties."⁵³ The earliest class conflict was the struggle for adjustment between the sovereign and subject classes. This relatively simple process was soon interrupted, however, by the development of a class of foreign merchants whose appearance marked the beginning of that extremely important element in every population, the middle class or the *bourgeoisie*.⁵⁴ In response to the growing needs of the developing state there were differentiated from these primary or original classes of rulers, merchants, and exploited masses such secondary or derived classes as the priesthood, professional classes, and artisans:

The phenomenon of class-building can be referred to a universal law: each want produces its own means of satisfaction. In so far as a class is able to satisfy a social want it is indispensable.⁵⁵

⁵¹ *Outlines*, p. 121.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 143-144.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 117, 127-129.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

The social process, in so far as it was confined to the internal affairs of the state, now became a complex and involved struggle between the various classes for participation in the control of the policy of the state in order to advance their respective interests:

The struggle between social groups, the component parts of the state, is as inexorable as that between hordes or states. The only motive is self-interest The social struggle consists in establishing appropriate institutions for increasing the power of one social group at the expense of others.⁵⁶

To carry on this conflict of classes within the state appropriate organs were necessary. Participation in legislation was found to be the most effective mode of social and political conflict. This explains the long struggle of the third and fourth estates to secure the right of participating in the legislative function of the state, and the tenacity of the ruling classes in the attempt to exclude them from this privilege.⁵⁷ In all cases the basis and measure of political power has been the ability to control human labor and its products. The ruling caste, composed of the original conquerors, kept its control over the labor of the masses through the aid of the habit of obedience and allegiance. The middle class obtained its political power from its control over material goods for which it could demand labor or its equivalent. The priestly class was able to secure political authority through its control over the minds of men and hence over their services. The exploited masses, whose services constituted the basis of all political power, were excluded from exercising any civic rights until after a long and difficult struggle for political emancipation.⁵⁸

The first concessions granted by the ruling caste gave rise to the notion of rights among the lower classes. The middle class was the first to make the appeal to "universal human rights, to freedom and equality." It pretended to be interested in advancing the interests of the masses and thus gained their support. While the masses were not re-

⁵⁶ *Outlines*, p. 145, cf. pp. 125, 132, 144-146.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 145-146.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 129-132.

warded to the extent of the promises made by the middle class, they gained experience in the methods of carrying on the struggle for political emancipation, and sooner or later they have succeeded in securing admission to the exercise of political functions and to a share in political authority. The process of political emancipation was greatly hastened and facilitated when the ruling caste was threatened by enemies from without and needed to conciliate its subjects in order to secure loyalty and unity.⁵⁹ Political rights are not metaphysical entities, says Gumpłowicz, but are merely the "regulations built up for the existence of unlike elements side by side and reduced by practice to rules and principles."⁶⁰ They are but the legal statement of the actual relations which exist in any political society at any time. Hence there can be no basis for any doctrine of inherent or metaphysical "natural rights."

"The premise of 'inalienable human rights' rests upon the most unreasonable self-deification of man and overestimation of the value of human life, and upon complete misconception of the only possible basis of the existence of the state."⁶¹ Rights are not founded upon justice. On the contrary, justice is "created only by the actual rights as they exist in the state. . . . It is the simple abstraction of political rights and it stands and falls with them."⁶²

Parallel with this process of political and economic development and continually interacting with and upon it, is the psychic and physical process of social unification. Assimilation or the psychic process proceeds most rapidly. The first step is the adoption of the language of the conquerors. Next follows the acceptance of their religion, manners and customs, and a cultural unity is formed. Finally, there comes the physical process of intermarriage or amalgamation and an ethnic unity is produced.⁶³ This uni-

⁵⁹ *Outlines*, pp. 148-150; *La Lutte des races*, 259-260. Gumpłowicz surveys human history to gather evidence for the support of his theory of political origins and development and concludes that all the evidence tends overwhelmingly to substantiate his thesis. *La Lutte des races*, pp. 265-345.

⁶⁰ *Outlines*, p. 178.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁶³ *La Lutte des races*, pp. 258-259.

fied and homogeneous social group constitutes a "folk-state" or nation—the highest product of social and political evolution.⁶⁴

The generalized account of political and social evolution which has been summarized above is in reality over simplified, for a large and highly developed state is rarely or never the product of a single conquest, but is normally the compound result of many processes of conquest and partial or complete assimilation and amalgamation.⁶⁵ A unified folk-state seldom remains such for any considerable period of time, for, as Gumplowicz contends in common with Machiavelli, Treitschke, and the German militarists, a state has an inevitable tendency to expand or decline. New conquests bring in another set of heterogeneous elements and the process outlined above must begin anew. No limit can be set to the extent of the possible or desirable expansion of a state. The natural tendency is for a state to increase until its strength fails from external resistance or internal disruption.⁶⁶ As was pointed out above, Gumplowicz maintains that ethical considerations have no relation to the conduct of states in a process of expansion. The state is a product of nature and is ruled and guided by the laws of nature and, thus, is not amenable to ethical judgment.⁶⁷ This is, of course, but the reappearance of the old Machiavellian doctrine, slightly embellished with a dash of pseudo-Darwinian sociology.

4. STATE ACTIVITY AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

Gumplowicz's pessimistic denial of social progress has already been analyzed. It is obvious that such a conception leaves no possibility for any such thing as social initiative, and though Gumplowicz adopted most of the Marxian premises, he accepted none of the socialistic deductions regarding the possibility of a transformation of society and the state by collective action.⁶⁸ The state and society are products of

⁶⁴ *Outlines*, pp. 153–154.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 150ff.; *La Lutte des races*, pp. 343ff.

⁶⁶ *Outlines*, pp. 150–153.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 146–148, 151–152.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Die sociologische Staatsidee*, pp. 36–39; *Rechtstaat und Socialismus*, pp. 487–505.

natural forces which are independent of all social activity. They develop through the action of "blind natural laws" that mankind is powerless to alter. Further, his conception of the cyclical nature of "progress" rules out any such notion as the indefinite perfectability of man and society through an increase in knowledge and a development of "collective telesis."⁶⁹ Both society and the individual must be resigned to their fate for they are powerless to avert it.⁷⁰ In fact, Gumpłowicz maintains that the chief practical value of his sociology is that it will prevent the waste of human energy in useless utopian schemes of social reform.⁷¹

IV. THE INFLUENCE AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF GUMPOWICZ'S INTERPRETATION OF SOCIAL EVOLUTION

In estimating the significance of Gumpłowicz for the history of sociology and political science and for the development of militarism and racial egoism in recent European history, it is necessary to differentiate those elements in his system which are of permanent value from those which have now been rejected, even by writers belonging to his particular group among sociologists.

While no authoritative student of anthropology would to-day accept Gumpłowicz's extreme doctrine of the polygenetic origin of the several branches of the human race, it is generally agreed that his chief contribution to sociology has consisted in his systematic elaboration of what has come to be accepted as the historical theory of the origin of the state and political sovereignty, though all would grant that he underestimated the pacific and coöperative factors which played at least some part in that process. His other significant and enduring contribution was his analysis of politi-

⁶⁹ Cf. L. F. Ward, *Dynamic Sociology*, vol. II, pp. 249-250, 545; *Pure Sociology*, pp. 573-575.

⁷⁰ Cf. *Sozialphilosophie im Umriss*, pp. 77-90.

⁷¹ *La Lutte des races*, pp. 350-352. See *American Journal of Sociology*, March, 1905, pp. 647-651. for an interesting account of a conversation between Gumpłowicz and Ward, in which the former apparently made some concessions to the latter's conception of social progress and "collective telesis."

cal activity within the state as a process of ceaseless struggle and continuous adjustment and readjustment between groups and classes which have their constituent principle in a common interest or policy. His revival and elucidation of the concept of the political party as an *interest-group* was a significant phase in the analysis of what has probably been the most fertile notion elaborated by political science in the last fifty years. When properly recognized and embodied in law and parliamentary practice, it will probably do more than anything else to give intelligence, rationale, and directness to party government. This notion has been accepted and expanded by French publicists, such as Duguit, Durkheim and Benoist, and especially by the Austrian sociologist, Ratzenhofer. Ratzenhofer's system has been interpreted to American readers through its critical exposition and analysis by Professor Small, and has been applied to the analysis of the operation of the American government by A. F. Bentley in what is undoubtedly the most valuable contribution made by an American writer to the analysis of the deeper processes of government since Calhoun published his *Disquisition on Government*.⁷²

Unfortunately, the disastrous aspects of the doctrines of Gumpłowicz are no less numerous and apparent. He was the most eminent and productive sociologist who has written in the German tongue and his complicity in producing the military obsession in the Germany of 1914 cannot be doubted. He was the most extreme advocate, among sociologists of any recognized standing, of the unqualified applicability of a misconstrued and perverted Darwinian biology to the interpretation of social processes, and was an equally ardent supporter of political fatalism, or the futility of human legislative activity in the face of the operation of the "blind natural laws" that set at naught the deeds of man. His representation of war as the sole agency in political development and the only reliable arbiter of the superiority of national *Kultur* was eagerly pounced upon by militarists, even less scientific and objective than Gumpłowicz, such as

⁷² A. F. Bentley, *The Process of Government*.

Moltke and Bernhardi in Germany, J. A. Cramb and Lord Roberts in England, and Déroulède in France, to furnish a plausible pseudo-scientific cloak for the advancement of their class and party interests. The importance of this type of theory in the creation of the state of mind that precipitated the tragedy of 1914 is now generally recognized, and Gumplowicz must bear his share of the burden of responsibility.⁷³ Further, his frequent assertion that the state was above all considerations and obligations of morality, like a natural phenomenon, was a congenial doctrine expanded by Nietzsche, Treitschke and the other exponents of *Machtpolitik* and *Realpolitik*. Finally, his excessive exaggeration of the process of racial conflict gave a dynamic trend to the Teutonic racial egoism which developed from the writings of Gobineau, Pötsche, Penka and Chamberlain. Gumplowicz, better than any other Germanic publicist, united the various theoretical monstrosities which combined to create the Teutonic national psychosis which initiated the calamity planned at Potsdam on the 5th of July, 1914.

V. THE PROGRESS IN THE THEORY OF GROUP CONFLICT SINCE GUMPLOWICZ

Probably the best criticism that can be made of the system of Gumplowicz is to examine it in the light of the doctrines of those members of the so-called "conflict school," who have written since Gumplowicz set forth his theories in the *Rassenkampf* and the *Grundriss*. Not another theorist of this school accepts his bald parallelism between biological and social evolution or approves of his notion that the struggle of races, states and social groups must continue without termination or mitigation. All either contend that the conflict is gradually transferred from the crude and elementary physical plane to a higher level of competition, or maintain that conflict ultimately ends in adaptation or coöperation.

⁷³ Cf. W. R. Thayer, "The Vagaries of Historians," *American Historical Review*, January, 1919, pp. 191-192; C. J. H. Hayes, "The War of the Nations," *Political Science Quarterly*, December, 1914.

Loria, Vaccaro and Oppenheimer have emphasized the tendency of the primordial physical struggle between groups to become transformed into an economic conflict.⁷⁴ Novicow has held that a study of social evolution reveals the fact that the primitive physical contest is progressively commuted through the alliance and federation of groups, and the substitution of intellectual competition.⁷⁵ This field of psychic struggles and adjustments has been explored with the greatest acumen by Tarde and Sighele.⁷⁶ According to De Greef, social evolution is a process of gradual substitution of contract and consent for the brute force of more primitive times.⁷⁷ Spencer and Tarde, but more especially, Vaccaro, have built up systems of sociology based upon the thesis that conflict ultimately terminates in an equilibrium or in adaptation.⁷⁸ Finally, Ratzenhofer and Small have insisted that conflict is continually tempered by socialization and transformed into coöperation, and that the "conquest-state" of early days is superseded by the "culture-state" of the modern age.⁷⁹

Therefore, even the adherents to the "conflict" theory are generally agreed that the transformation of conflict into alliance and coöperation seems to be a function of social evolution and they would apparently support the notion that war must be followed by an ultimate international adjustment which will forever exclude the recrudescence of the crude process of physical warfare. But all this lies in the realm of the abstract. It may readily be conceded that these the-

⁷⁴ A. Loria, *The Economic Foundations of Society*; M. A. Vaccaro, *Les Bases sociologiques du droit et de l'état*; F. Oppenheimer, *The State*.

⁷⁵ J. Novicow, *Les Luites entre sociétés humaines; La Fédération de l'Europe*.

⁷⁶ G. Tarde, *L'Opposition universelle; Social Laws*; Sighele, S., *Psychologie des sectes*.

⁷⁷ G. De Greef, *Introduction à la sociologie*.

⁷⁸ H. Spencer, *First Principles*, Part II; G. Tarde, *La Logique sociale*; Vaccaro, op. cit., especially Introduction, pp. v-vii, 78ff.; 188ff. It is to be regretted that Dr. Bristol, in his helpful book on *Social Adaptation*, failed to include a discussion of Vaccaro, who has done more than any other sociologist to develop the notion of "adaptation" as a sociological process.

⁷⁹ G. Ratzenhofer, *Wesen und Zweck der Politik; Die sociologische Erkenntnis*; A. W. Small, *General Sociology*, pp. 190ff.

ories are valid, but it may legitimately be asked if we must wait for the tardy and expensive method of allowing this final era of alliance and coöperation to be brought about by the automatic processes of social evolution. Cannot man anticipate this development and by legislation secure the benefits of peace in advance? The doctrine that man may anticipate the normal course of social evolution by well-considered legislation was one of the few sound doctrines contained in the fantastic social philosophy of the French utopian socialist, Fourier.⁸⁰ It was revived and made the cornerstone of the sociological system of America's earliest and most voluminous writer on sociological matters, Lester F. Ward, and has been regarded as the chief theoretical contribution of sociology to social legislation.⁸¹ The bearing of this important thesis upon the present problem of the creation of a league of nations, which will furnish that all-important organ for the peaceful adjustment of international conflict, for which man has been striving through the ages, is obvious. Few students of history, politics or sociology will doubt the scientific justification or the desirability of the establishment of such an organization or the possibility of its erection, if its organizers comprehend and provide for the control of those fundamental sociological causes of rivalry and strife which have existed from the dawn of history and are not likely to be self-eliminated for centuries to come.⁸² If, on the other hand, the statesmen at the peace conference ignore the lessons and teachings of history and sociology and act upon the eighteenth century premise that social and political relations can be directly transformed and adjusted by the application of a few simple and self-

⁸⁰ Cf. Gide, *Selections from the Works of Fourier*, O. D. Skelton, *Socialism: a Critical Analysis*, pp. 69-70.

⁸¹ See the references given above, note 69.

⁸² For a summary presentation of some of the more important of these sociological obstacles to "perpetual peace," see the article by Dr. F. H. Hankins, "Is a Permanent Peace Possible?" in *The Journal of Race Development*, April, 1918; for a sociological argument supporting the immediate creation of a "league of democratic nations" to enforce peace, see the article by Professor Giddings, "The Bases of an Enduring Peace," *Bulletin of the American Association for International Conciliation*, April, 1917.

evident "dictates of pure reason," their organization will break up on the rocks of practical application, as did that of 1815, which failed, not only on account of weakness of central organization, but even more because it deliberately set itself directly across the path of the chief historical and sociological forces of the nineteenth century—nationality, democracy and the expansion of the Industrial Revolution.